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LEVANT CRISIS REVEALS CLASH OF INTERESTS IN MIDDLE EAST

THE Syrian crisis provides not only an object lesson for the United Nations at San Francisco; it also strikingly reveals the decline of French power in the Levant and Britain's desire for greater influence in that area. General de Gaulle has explained that his own order for the withdrawal of French troops from the fighting in the Levant came before Prime Minister Churchill's peremptory cease-fire request of May 31. But Franco-British relations have suffered a severe setback, and it is now doubtful whether the French government will accede to the British desire to deal with the matter at a tripartite London conference composed only of French, British and American representatives. On the contrary, in his press conference of June 2, de Gaulle clearly indicated his preference for a five-power meeting to discuss not only the problems of Syria and the Lebanon but those of the entire Middle East. Pursuing his aim of broadening the discussions, de Gaulle met on June 4 with the Russian, British and American Ambassadors in Paris. This action was in line with the suggestion made in the Soviet note of June 1.

FRANCO-SYRIAN DISPUTE. Difficulties in the Levant are not new for France, but its position as the mandatory power has been especially precarious since 1936. The Blum government carried on negotiations at that time to terminate the mandates and arrange an alliance with Syria and the Lebanon. The French Chamber of Deputies refused to ratify the treaty, however, and France entered the European war with the dispute hanging fire. After France's capitulation in 1940, French officials in the Near East chose to follow the Vichy régime. In 1941 British and Free French forces occupied Syria and promised the mandates early independence, although the exact nature of the pledge has proved a moot question. Since that time both France and Britain have granted recognition to the two states on condi-

tion that France be accorded special privileges similar to those held by Britain in Egypt or Iraq. The United States and Russia, by contrast, have recognized the full independence of the former mandates.

Syrian and Lebanese officials have argued at length that they are unable to negotiate a final treaty with France unless fully possessed of their sovereign rights. Once their sovereignty has been recognized, the two states might offer France certain rights with respect to the protection of its cultural interests, but none apparently with respect to military bases or economic concessions. Within the past year, France has relinquished control of most administrative positions in both states. In the Lebanon, however, French authorities summarily arrested local officials in November 1943 for passing domestic legislation contrary to French wishes. In both Syria and the Lebanon France has retained control of the security troops stationed in the region, and it is on the plea of re-deploying troops to the Far East that France has, in fact, strengthened these forces in recent months.

France's claim that it must safeguard its route to Indo-China by a privileged position in the Levant is similar to Britain's claim that it must hold the Empire life line by maintaining its position in Palestine. Aside from these strategic interests, the economic resources of the Middle East attract the keen attention of all great powers. After World War I France sought the Syrian mandate largely to obtain access to the petroleum fields of the Mosul area. In a world of new power relationships—dependent as never before on oil for industrial as well as military purposes—the de Gaulle government has only followed a natural course by seeking to retain predominant influence in Syria.

ARAB LEAGUE SUPPORTS SYRIA. The Levant crisis also raises the question of the attitude that may be taken by the newly formed Arab League, whose

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charter was announced on March 22. Although membership is limited at present to nations in the Near East, the League's attitude must perforce concern France whose North African possessions are so closely related to the Arab states in nationalist sympathies, religion and culture. Syria and the Lebanon have played an active part during the past two years in laying the foundations for the Arab League, and when they became deadlocked with the French, the League gave its support to the two Arab countries. The League's Council, originally scheduled to meet for the first time late this summer, hurriedly convened in Cairo on June 4 to decide its future course in the Syrian dispute. The League is also vitally concerned with the future of Palestine and opposes Zionist plans for the creation of a Jewish Commonwealth. Britain's support of the Arab League, therefore, raises far-reaching questions not only about Arabs but also about the disposition of the Palestinian mandate.

GREAT POWERS INTERVENE. The prompt reaction of the United States and Russia to the Levant dispute clearly shows the new interest these two great powers take in the affairs of a region where neither had an active concern in the past. America's strategic interests, like those of Britain, are involved,

for the Mediterranean route will prove invaluable in transporting men and supplies from Europe's recent battlefields to those of the Far East. American oil interests, poised for further exploitation of the Middle Eastern reserves, are also concerned with the role of France in that area. Our support of Churchill's note to de Gaulle, expressed by President Truman on May 28, should be interpreted not as a threat to the French but as a sign of the growing importance of the Middle East to our national security.

The Soviet Union alone among the great powers has pointed to some of the larger problems at stake in the Middle East. Here, as in Europe, the Soviet Union has placed itself in an advantageous public position. By stating that the dispute demands the coordinated action of all the great powers, Russia is merely repeating the views previously expressed by many American and British observers. For most of the tangled issues of the Middle East cannot be solved without full cooperation on the part of all the powers now interested in the area. If such cooperation cannot be achieved, friction will persist, and the Arab League may then become the tool of any power willing to back Arab demands in a given crisis.

GRANT S. MCCLELLAN

PUBLIC CRITICISM FORCES U.S. TO REVIEW POLICY ON ARGENTINA

As the military government of Argentina enters its third year, the United States seems no more certain of its policy toward Buenos Aires than in the days immediately following the June 4, 1943 revolution. Although the long-withheld official recognition has been accorded and Argentina has been admitted to the UNCIO, the State Department, confronted by widespread criticism of its policy here and reports of a veritable reign of terror in Buenos Aires, has now been compelled to adopt a less cordial attitude toward Argentina. The reference made to that country by Secretary of State Stettinius in his San Francisco broadcast on May 28 indicated that the State Department's method of dealing with the Argentine problem has been revised, if not actually changed. Since then, warnings from Washington have been countered by suave assurances from Buenos Aires that every international commitment would be fulfilled. In the course of this diplomatic exchange, Mr. Spruille Braden, newly appointed Ambassador to Argentina, stated that one of our mutual obligations "is to make effective our fervent adherence to democracy and to the principles and purposes of the Atlantic Charter."

CONFUSION OF VIEWS ON ARGENTINA. Hitherto, a wide divergence has existed between the views expressed by the State Department, on the one hand, and public opinion as reflected in the press, on the other, regarding the precise nature of the con-

ditions which Argentina should be asked to fulfill if it is to be regarded as a member in good standing of the hemisphere family. The American people, guided by the strongly worded attacks of President Roosevelt and Cordell Hull against the internal "Fascist" régime of that country, had assumed that the Farrell government would have to square its internal methods—as well as its foreign policy—with the aims and objectives of the United Nations. Under Secretary Stettinius, however, the State Department retreated from the position taken by Mr. Hull, and took the stand that, to win United States recognition, the Farrell government should declare war on the Axis and clear the country of all centers of Axis influence. The new "team" in the Department has stated on numerous occasions that, in its dealings with Latin American nations, it would seek to uphold the principle of nonintervention—a policy applauded by Pan-Americanists. In theory, this position has the advantage of consistency: for we can hardly ask of Argentina what we do not ask of Brazil, Paraguay, or the Dominican Republic, to name a few Latin American countries with undemocratic régimes. Yet, in practice, any action undertaken by Washington in a region where our political and economic interests are deeply rooted assumes the character of intervention, favoring one faction against another, or one country against its neighbor. The United States, by recognizing the military régime of Argentina,

has, in this instance, helped a shaky government to maintain itself in power, against the will of its people and to the ultimate detriment of relations between the Argentines and ourselves.

U.S. OBJECTIVES NOT ACHIEVED. The most unfortunate aspect of the matter is that Washington has not achieved even its limited objective. It has not succeeded in completely eliminating Axis activities or in fostering the semblance, at least, of peaceful government in Buenos Aires. The Farrell régime, in return for a paper declaration of war, was accorded recognition and—against the expressed wishes of Russia—a seat at the United Nations Conference. By this over-hasty action we lost our political weapon of pressure, alienated on this question our most powerful ally, and gave the Colonels' government a blank check to pursue its reactionary policies unhampered by outside interference.

Now that chilling reports come from Buenos Aires of "conditions worse than those encountered in Fascist Italy"—information which Washington must have had in its possession for some time—the State Department may find cause to regret its recent policy toward Argentina. But the only means we now have to further the application of democratic principles in Argentina is our economic bargaining power. It is reported, without confirmation, that our export quotas to Argentina are being reconsidered.

BUENOS AIRES PROMISES ELECTIONS. The fact that the United States may belatedly attach conditions to the full resumption of relations with Argentina probably accounts for the promulgation on June 1 of the long-promised statute of political parties. For although the decree has been ready at least a month, its publication was postponed until the moment when Vice President Perón, with his customary acumen, judged it necessary once more to placate international opinion. The statute establishes a Federal electoral court, whose power extends to each province through provincial electoral judges. The court is empowered to authorize or prohibit the organization of political parties and the appointment of their leaders, to scrutinize membership lists and expenditures, and to intervene in intra-party disputes. Party leaders are to be elected by direct, compulsory and secret ballot; and their campaign expenditures are not to exceed \$2,500. While the original draft

excluded civil servants and illiterates from party membership, the decree as finally published eliminated this provision. Should Perón encourage the formation of a new party, which would then "draft" him as Presidential candidate, it is clear that he could derive considerable support from these groups.

Many Argentines would agree that the malpractices of the past were in no small degree responsible for the tragic failure of Argentine democracy. But, if administered by the present régime, it will simply lead to the resumption of machine politics formerly employed by the Conservative party. What makes it clear that this decree is but another example of the government's delaying tactics is the fact that it will not become effective until August 1. Political parties will not be able to organize before the first of November. This they cannot do, in any case, until the ban on political activities is lifted and the "war emergency" declared at an end. Since December 16, 1941 Argentina has been under a state of siege which suppresses individual guarantees, freedom of opinion and the right of assembly. Between now and the end of the year, therefore, the military régime will doubtless attempt to quell dissident elements and rally its shaken Army support.

RESISTANCE ALONG THE RIVER PLATE. Despite the apparent hopelessness of their position, the pre-revolution political parties, now functioning underground, are perhaps better organized and more active today than ever before. On February 15 in Montevideo, Conservative, Radical, Socialist and Communist party leaders formed a Junta of Resistance and pledged themselves to cooperate for the reinstatement of normal constitutional government. That political unity has been achieved is a notable step, the more so when it is recalled that the failure of the democratic parties to work together in 1943 gave the nationalists power by default. The leadership of the Junta resides in the Montevideo exiles; but throughout Argentina, according to a recent "communiqué" issued by the underground to the Latin American delegates at San Francisco, there is a large cooperating movement, composed of a cross section of the Argentine people, including Army men. This movement calls itself "Free Fatherland," and declares it will not stop at violence to rid the country of the Colonels.

OLIVE HOLMES

DISPUTE OVER VETO WILL NOT JEOPARDIZE UNCIO CHARTER

SAN FRANCISCO.—The Charter emerging from the United Nations Conference on International Organization is still incomplete after six weeks of meetings, but its general nature is already clear. Decisions tentatively reached preserve the fundamental principle of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals—that security can be best achieved by the military might of a limited number of great or potentially great states

combined in what amounts to an alliance. The big-power alliance, in turn, is made the core of an organization where the weak will have an opportunity to influence the strong by persuasion, if they can, through public discussion in the General Assembly, and to further the development of humanitarian standards through the Economic and Social Council. The unity of the great powers on the issue of the

essential nature of the organization has not been shaken by disagreements among themselves over questions like trusteeship. The delegations of the United States and the Soviet Union have been most firm in supporting the alliance principle.

CONFLICT AT SAN FRANCISCO. The smaller nations have concentrated their efforts during the first six weeks of the Conference on attacking the alliance principle in two ways. They have challenged the Yalta Agreement of February 12, which recognizes the privilege of any one of the five major powers—the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, France and China—to veto any step in either the peaceful or forceful settlement of a dispute; and, second, they have tried to strengthen the other agencies of the proposed organization, such as the Economic and Social Council and the Court. This struggle has been an outstanding feature of the Conference, where the active lesser states have tried to create an organization in which sovereign nations of unequal size and strength would have relatively equal authority.

Thus far the lesser states have gained no essential victory. For practical purposes the Court is, in the Charter's embryonic form, a secondary agency, subordinate to the political and military control of the Security Council. Amendments have been adopted in committee that elevate the Economic and Social Council to the role of a "principal organ" but, since the Council remains restricted by the concept of sovereignty, it can only recommend action to the member states. The General Assembly retains the power only to debate and to suggest; the most it can become is the world's sounding board. The key institution of the alliance, the Security Council, retains at the end of six weeks the authority the Dumbarton Oaks proposals assigned to it originally. The five permanent members of the Security Council are the Big Five which make up the alliance. Their firm determination to safeguard the alliance principle explains their unyielding reluctance to abandon the Yalta Agreement on the privilege of "veto" as its opponents call it, or the "unanimity rule" as it is described by its defenders. While a world organization of sovereign nations with equal powers might function by majority or two-thirds rule, alliances of nations function only by common agreement or else fall apart. Secretary of State Stettinius emphasized this side of veto-unanimity in his address of May 27, when he said: "The five permanent members of the Security Council have at their disposal an overwhelming propor-

tion of the men and material necessary to enforce peace. . . . What happens if one of the five permanent members embarks on a course of aggression and refuses to recognize the machinery of the World Organization? . . . Another world war has come, vote or no vote, and the World Organization has failed."

EXTENSIVE GREAT POWER CONTROL. The crisis between Syria and France has given the delegates here a sense of urgency about their business, and to some degree has furnished the prod to action which might have been provided long ago by the United States. The Conference has lacked leadership. Delegates of the principal powers consider it wiser, however, to permit full discussion now rather than to invite the bitter reproach later that the Charter was hurried through. Yet despite the impetus given by the Levant crisis, the end of the Conference seems far away. New disagreement among the major allies themselves developed on May 29, when the Soviet Union, in opposition to Britain, requested the abolition of restrictions on the transfer of League mandates to the new world organization. The lesser powers are still struggling not only against a rigid interpretation of the veto, but also against a great-power veto on amendments to the Charter. A proposal of the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and China would authorize the calling of a convention to consider amendments at the instance of the Assembly but only with the approval of the Security Council—presumably voting by the unanimity rule. On May 30 the Soviet Union indicated the great powers' desire to maintain operational control of the organization in the hands of the permanent members of the Security Council when it objected to a Netherlands-Australian interpretation that the Assembly could reject any candidate whom the Security Council might nominate as Secretary General of the organization.

BLAIR BOLLES

Gold and the Gold Standard, by Edwin W. Kemmerer. New York, McGraw Hill, 1944. \$2.50

This book presents a brief history of the gold standard, with special emphasis on its use before and after World War I. The author presents a plan for its revived use after World War II.

Colonies, by Eric A. Walker. Cambridge, England, University Press, 1944. \$1.25

In this brief volume the author seeks to explain the colonial policies of Britain, France, the Netherlands, the United States and the U.S.S.R.

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